

# Boo Martin Email Dated Feb. 15 2022

Inbox



[Boo@steppingstoneeventcenter.com](mailto:Boo@steppingstoneeventcenter.com)

Feb 15, 2022,  
7:35 PM

to Reddin9

Here was my original email. Warmly, Boo

**From:** [Boo@steppingstoneeventcenter.com](mailto:Boo@steppingstoneeventcenter.com) <[Boo@steppingstoneeventcenter.com](mailto:Boo@steppingstoneeventcenter.com)>  
**Sent:** Friday, February 4, 2022 2:50 PM  
**Subject:** Wanting to connect with you and ask a favor of you

Dear Friends and Neighbors on Webster Highway,

I hope that you are safely at home today in the drizzle and mess! What a winter we have had. I send all best wishes.

For those of you who don't know me, I am Boo Martin. I am the owner of the farm just after the fork of North Road and Webster Highway. The yellow Homestead, big brown barn and Lodge are the main buildings on the 27+ acre property. Our moved to this farm in 1965. I started a residential summer riding camp on the farm in 1971. I bought the property from my parents in 1975 so we could have a retreat center, riding lesson program and expand summer camp. In 1977, we built the Lodge. In 2001, the Indoor Arena was built to expand our lesson and summer camp programs. We soon added a large veterans' equine therapy program in addition to horse shows, clinics, vacation camps...in short everything "horses". At the peak of the farm in the summer, we had nearly 70 horses for both day and residential camp and riding lessons. For many years, I had rented the farm to Horse Power and Pony Farm which merged to become a nonprofit called Touchstone Farm in 2011. In total, I have lived on the property 57 years and run a business on the property for 50 years.

As you may know, I took back the 'reins' of the farm in September of 2020 when Touchstone Farm purchased a new property. I was thrilled to return to my childhood home. Our family and many friends began repairing and restoring the buildings, fields and barns at 372 Webster Highway under the new name Stepping Stones Farm & Event Center.

I began to seek permission from the three Temple Boards in January of 2020. I sought permission to change the use of the farm from a large horse farm to a smaller business which offered space for family & friends gatherings such birthdays, reunions, anniversaries, baby showers, retreats and business/nonprofit meetings, and vacation farm stays. Our plan included hosting up to 15 weddings a year. We also spoke about

expanding the farming piece of the business so our guests can enjoy the farm ambiance by visiting goats, chickens, donkeys, miniature horses and a few horses. These horses would do carriage and sleigh rides. Finally, the plan included doing more actual production farming to use the 27+ acres to raise meat, hay, eggs, honey and fruit for a CSA (Community Supported Agriculture). We committed to tend the grounds and the historic buildings with great care so that the legacy of farm's long history of hospitality would continue into the future. We also stated that we had no plans for any new construction.

As of today, we are in the 26<sup>th</sup> month of seeking the Boards' permission to run a business on the same property where I have run a business for 50 years!!!

We have hired municipal lawyers to re-write our initial application to the ZBA because it was beyond what our family and friends could do. We have also hired professionals to help Stepping Stones fulfill all town ordinances.

However, two Abutters continue to argue that our business is adversely affecting their property value and quality of life. One lives in Connecticut and does not have a house on their property. The other one lives in Wilton and is just under a mile away.

Today, I am reaching out to you, as residents of Webster Highway, to ask your help to counter their allegations. I am hoping you will help us get final permission to operate a small, well run and sustainable business that continues the tradition of hospitality and farming upon which Temple was founded.

We have created the following Petition to bring to the next ZBA hearing. It is my sincere hope that you might lend your name as a resident of Webster Highway. Please read the following text taken out of the ZBA Application and consider signing the Petition. This will go a long way to answer the Abutters' claims that we are ruining the neighborhood.

**Stepping Stones Farm & Event Center has NOT adversely affected the value of my property on Webster Highway in Temple by being obnoxious or injurious to me or my family. There have been no incidences of excessive noise, odor, smoke, refuse matter, vibration, traffic, dust, fumes, light, glare, drainage, or other conditions that are associated with Stepping Stones since September 1<sup>st</sup>, 2020.**

Name	Address	Number
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If you have any questions or would like to know more about this, PLEASE call me at 321-5255 or email me at [Boo@steppingstoneseventcenter.com](mailto:Boo@steppingstoneseventcenter.com) I would be so happy to meet or speak with you to allay any fears you might have or answer any questions.

I am going to come to visit each of you on Sunday February 13<sup>th</sup> between 1 and 4PM. I am hoping you will open your door and sign your name when I come knocking!!!

I have lived in and loved Temple for 57 years. I want to continue to live here and enjoy our wonderful town. I have been a good neighbor and run a business in the community without incident for all 50 years. I plan to keep doing that for the rest of my life! Please help me to keep the farm intact and not have to sell for subdivision. What a tragic, unnecessary loss that would be.

Thank you in advance for reading this email. Again, I welcome your questions and want to hear if you have any concerns. I hope to see you next Sunday to get your signature.

With all gratitude and continued high hopes for the future. Warmly, Boo Martin

Isabella (Boo) Martin  
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